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At times of great calamities the tempo and the variety of songs increase which are rather of a mournful type. Every one who has lost his closest friend, a son, a relative, her admirer expresses their saddest grief in song which is made by each person with a touching tune. When somebody mourns in the village usually the light gay type of music disappears for sometime and the village bans dances. All share alike in the grief of their neighbor, and even if there was a marriage, it would be postponed due to the general approval of the villagers for the sake of the mourning period.

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Reading. Megali Vrisi does more reading than any other village in the neighborhood. This is perhaps due to the influence of the priest-teacher whose life has become a part of his villagers in educating them. He served his villagers for 37 years as teacher and priest, still continuing as a priest. His main purpose for teaching his people to read and write was to make them able to read and understand the universe about them. He had his own personal library and out of it loaned books /40/ to bright farmers so that they could read them to the others. His plan in giving lectures to the farmers on certain scientific topics created among the farmers an interest in reading and discovering. The books that interested them most were biographies, histories, geography, politics and inventions. None were interested in fiction or romance.

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The younger children had more zest in reading than the older people, but there were not enough books. I often found young men, at night sitting in groups of 6 to 10 to read the whole book with a kerosene lamp light so that others might have the chance to read it too. Reading among women is done less due to the nature of their work. They arekept busy from sunrise till late at night. Another important phase of the reading is the daily newspaper at the coffee house. Everybody once or twice a day drops in at the coffee house to read the newspaper. Discussions as to its news and editorial comments are conducted between groups of different political beliefs.

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to read and write. Besides this, agricultural lectures were given to the farmers by the agriculturist of the area during the winter months on different topics concerning the farming life of the area. A series of 5 lectures were organized by the priest of the village on different topics such as history, travel, biography, and inventions. Thus the farmers of Megali Vrisi had an ample chance to get whatever they could from these different agencies.

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/76/ Part VII Religion

Magic. The people of Megali Vrisi, due to numerous activities of an educational character that have been established there, find themselves in a transition period of trying to put aside old beliefs and adopt new ones. They still believe that certain people in the village have power to command the spirits and perform miracles. A young man who thinks that his sweetheart does not like him finds as an outlet the consultation of magicians and their command of the spirits to change her mind. If a member of the family is in a foreign country or on travel the magicians are asked to order the spirits to protect them. A pregnant woman desiring to give birth to a boy instead of a girl asks the magicians to act favorably to her desires. The people who perform the role of a magician are old women with suspicious looks. The same women may act as mid-wives, too.

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Certain signs handed down from generation to generation are believed to be true. A black cat crossing the road is thought a bad sign. If you meet a priest early in the morning, they think the whole day will be filled with failures. Dogs crying mean somebody is going /77/ to die in the neighborhood. When the eyelid moves fast some good news is coming.

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The above are a few of the good and bad luck signs.

Religious beliefs. Almost every farmer has a Saint in whom he believes strongly. The ikon of the Saint, in front of which he

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introduced under the direction of the Rockefeller Foundation. In the thirties, the dictator Metaxas introduced a number of changes by fiat, which ran counter to Greek values, but many of which were accepted gratefully by people wearied of political dissension and lack of leadership. World War II, with its displacements and destruction and enemy occupation, the work of UNRRA and the Greek War Relief, and more recently, of the POS agency of the ECA, have all been agents of change.

There are many kinds of Greeks. The million or so Greeks who came from Turkey and Russia in the twenties differ from the so-called "old Greeks". The city Greeks consider themselves very different from the peasants. There is a vogue for peasant handicrafts but not for peasant attitudes. Urban Greeks like to take on the ways of foreigners, to use the products of technology, even the processed foods of technology. Many French and English words are used in their speech. They take on the attitudes of the Western World, using clocked time in business and living a life relatively pressed for time, adopting to some extent the Western scientific approach and objective external limits, instead of the more animistic approach and the body-patterned limits of traditional Greek culture. There are lectures here on health and hygiene, on child care and co-operation and nutrition. In Athens, the music and the drama are excellent, and in line with Euro-American developments. There is rapid transportation. There are many associations based on foreign patterns: the YMCA and the YWCA, the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts, football groups and hiking groups. There are foreign attitudes about travel: people go to tour the country or the world, instead of going to visit a relative or a family friend or a miraculous shrine. The difference reaches its greatest intensity as between the educated Greeks and the peasants, who, though literate, have no high education.

People of different regions have a different way of life. The mountainous terrain, the absence of easy communication except coastwise, differences in dialect and local history, and, most of all, the extreme personal independence of the people, have fostered tremendous variation from place to place. To the world at large, a man may be a Greek, but to other Greeks, he is a Macedonian, an Arcadian, or an Epirot. More than this, he comes from a particular village of which he is very proud and for whose honour he competes with other villages. In the United States, Greeks from one village, such as Mani, have organized themselves in a nationwide organization. People from one small island speak of the people of the neighbouring island as queer or ill-mannered. This is as it should be; in Greek culture it is good for everyone to be different or, as the Greeks put it, to be individually formed.

The differences are there but the similarities are more basic. The Athenians, working by clock time, strain at their bonds, and do not